

Remarks

Claims 1, 3-7, 9, 11, 12, 14-16 and 18 are pending.

Claims 1 and 18 have been amended.

Claim 4 has been canceled.

Claims 1, 3, 5-7, 9, 11, 12, 14-16, 18 and 19 are submitted herein for review.

No new matter has been added.

On page 2 of the Office Action the Examiner rejected claims 18-19 under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph for using the indefinite term "several locations." Applicants have amended claim 18 accordingly and respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

On page 3, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 3-7, 9, 12, 14-16 and 18, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the previously cited McGinty et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,712,688) in view of Smeets et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,836,825), further in view of the new cited reference Weston et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,499,944). Applicants respectfully disagree with Examiner's claim of obviousness and offer the following remarks in response.

The present invention as claimed in claim 1 is directed to a method for processing coins introduced in a coin tester of an automatic unit delivering goods or services. The coin tester contains a selector for distinguishing the value of introduced coins, a pre-receptacle, at least one reserve for recycling certain coins, including a plurality of

locations, each location being able to receive only one coin of any value, a bowl for giving back coins, and a safe for storing coins in bulk.

Among other steps, the method includes the step of storing an introduced coin in the safe instead of the reserve, if the reserve is full, or if the number of coins which are present in the reserve having the same value as the introduced coin is equal to a predetermined maximum number of coins *where the maximum number of coins of a certain predetermined value is equal to the capacity of the reserve.*

Such an arrangement is able to store deposited coins in either a reserve (with the potential to be used as change for future purchases) or in a safe (for semi-permanent storage) in such a way as to maximize the time between necessary emptying of the coin system of the automatic unit. In particular, the arrangement where *the maximum number of coins of a certain predetermined value is equal to the capacity of the reserve* is useful in achieving this goal in that it assists in maximizing storage of desired coins in the reserve, namely coins that are introduced (deposited by customers) less frequently than they are given back as change. See paragraphs [0088] and [0089].

The cited prior art, namely McGinty and Smeets do not teach the element of the regulation of the number of coins in the reserve based upon the number of coins of various values stored in the reserve. See lines 3-4 of page 5 of the Office Action. Instead, the Examiner goes on to assert that Weston teaches such a feature and that it would be obvious to combine this feature with the system of McGinty and Smeets to arrive at the present invention as claimed.

Applicants submit two arguments in response. Firstly, there is no teaching or suggestion in either McGinty or Weston that suggests to one of ordinary skill in the art, to

combine the reserve of Weston with the arrangement in McGinty. In fact, McGinty specifically teaches away from using vertical coin tubes for specifically valued coins as taught by Weston.

For example, column 4, lines 46-53 of McGinty states:

“In this way, instead of the coins being stored in vertically arranged coin tubes sized for specific coins denominations, as is customary in the prior art, any conventional (present or likely future) coin (or a number of coins) can be stored in any of the coin stalls. Thus, the limitations on the number of different types of coins stored in the coin changer are effectively eliminated.” (emphasis added)

As such, one of ordinary skill in the art would not look to replace the coin reserve (carousel) of McGinty with the vertical coin stacks as taught by Weston. Applicants submit that for at least this reason, the prior art rejection of independent claims 1 and 18 should be withdrawn.

However, as a second argument, even if the Examiner disagrees with the above argument, and the references were combined as suggested by the Examiner, the resulting structure would still not teach or suggest all of the elements of the present invention as claimed.

The Weston reference teaches a coin storing device comprising a reserve made from three tubes or containers 22, 24 and 26, each stack for a coin of a particular determination. See column 3, lines 52 to 55 of Weston.

This coin storing device also includes a microprocessor arranged to maintain counts representing the numbers of coins in the respective containers 22, 24 and 26. See column 4, lines 57 to 60.

In a “float up” mode, any coins of one denomination, stored by the container 24,

are directed to the tube 24, unless the number of coins in the tube is equal to or greater than an upper level "FU", with FU being a variable value. See column 5, lines 40 to 44.

Weston further teaches an algorithm so that if the number of coins dispensed is large, coins are more likely to be routed to the container 24, and thus the upper level FU is set at a higher level so as to maximize the opportunity to provide change. If however, the number of coins dispensed is small, the container will fill up, and the excess coins are then directed to the cashbox. The level FU may thus be set at a low level, which reduces the amount of cash retained in the machine. See column 6, lines 14-22. A similar function occurs for the other containers 22 and 26.

According to this arrangement, the reserve is subdivided into three vertical columns, each for coins of different denomination where the maximum number of coins of a certain predetermined value is equal to the capacity of the tube dedicated to coins of that value. Weston does not teach that the maximum number of coins *of a certain predetermined value* is equal to the *capacity of the reserve* (ie. the entire reserve).

As such, even if the references are combined as suggested by the Examiner, Applicants respectfully submit that the combined references do not teach or suggest all of the elements as claimed in independent claims 1 and 18. For example, neither McGinty nor Weston, either alone or in combination with one another, teach or suggest that *the maximum number of coins of a certain predetermined value is equal to the capacity of the reserve*.

For this additional reason, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of independent claims 1 and 18 be withdrawn. Likewise, as claims 3, 5-7, 9, 12, and 14-16 depend from claim 1, and claim 19 depends from claim 18, these claims should be

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allowed for at least the same reasons.

Applicants respectfully submit that pending claims 1, 3, 5-7, 9, 11, 12, 14-16, and 18-19 are in condition for allowance, the earliest possible notice of which is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner feels that an interview would facilitate the prosecution of this Application he is invited to contact the undersigned at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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